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We are pleased to announce that the SSMS How To Guides have been posted to the website for use by SSMS Phase I districts. The Guides will be made available to the Phase II districts as training is completed. Training is beginning for Phase I (follow-up) and Phase II (initial) districts.

We have completed the initial network analysis using CompuWare. This diagnostic software allows us to assess the network within the State Data Center (SDC). The results of the initial assessment are currently being analyzed. The next phase of the assessment will be from the SDC back to the regional platforms (POPs) and to the districts.

Internal network assessment and analysis remain available from the vendors. Based on our experience to date, we strongly recommend that all districts take advantage of at least the minimal diagnostics offered. In a few districts, we have seen a problem with virus activity within the local network. This activity has degraded the network performance. When identified and addressed, the districts have seen improved network and performance with SSMS.

The hardware for the High Availability Architecture in the SDC has arrived. Installation will begin in February. This architecture will allow us to have a staging and production site. It will also address our load balancing issues and redundancy issues within the SDC. This should help alleviate a lot of the network slowness in the afternoons.

The Knoxville POP has been upgraded by ENA to allow for additional bandwidth. The Phase I districts with traffic routed through the Knoxville POP should see improved performance.

We are continuing to work on the ADM/ADA calculations. Please continue scrubbing those data elements identified for your district if you have not completed that process.

We are also pressing to have EIS functional for all districts by the end of June.

During the next few weeks, we will be working to procure a Unique Student Identifier System with a comprehensive de-duplication process for all districts, whether an SSMS district or not.

Also, the next few weeks will see a "ramping up" of the SSMS/EIS Help Desk operation to help improve our response time and quality.

Finally, for those of you are upgrading or planning to upgrade your hardware for SSMS. We are seeing that the performance level on machines with 512 is much better than those with 128-256.

On behalf of the entire Department of Education, thank you again for all that you are doing to make this and many other projects succeed for the teachers and children of Tennessee.

Dr. Timothy K. Webb, Assistant Commissioner